

Message Text

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ORIGIN EUR-12

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DRAFTED BY EUR/CAN:DCHOLTON:PB

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EB/TT/TD - JOHN J. O'NEILL

EUR:RDVINE

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R 222349Z MAY 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

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E.O. 11652:N/A ;

TAGS: ETEL, EFIN, CA, SCUL

SUBJECT: TAX QUESTION AND BORDER TV STATIONS

REF: (A) OTTAWA 1884 (B) OTTAWA 1510

1. WASHINGTON ATTORNEYS REPRESENTING BUFFALO TV STATIONS MET MAY 21 WITH THEIR CANADIAN COUNSEL AND DECIDED TO PARTICIPATE IN HEARINGS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON BROADCASTING. WE UNDERSTAND STATIONS WILL NOT STRENUOUSLY OPPOSE PRINCIPLE OF TAX MEASURE AND WILL URGE PHASED IMPLEMENTATION AS SUGGESTED REFTEL (B). THEY WILL EMPHASIZE THEIR OBJECTION TO DELETION/SUBSTITUTION, WHICH THEY SEE AS IMMORAL, AND ITS COMBINATION WITH TAX MEASURE. STATIONS HAVE NOT REQUESTED ASSISTANCE OF DEPARTMENT OR EMBASSY, BUT KNOW OF OUR INTEREST.

2. BORDER STATIONS' ATTORNEYS HAVE BEEN GRATEFUL FOR EMBASSY'S INFORMATION ON COURSE OF BILL C-58. EMBASSY REQUESTED TO CONTINUE REPORTING SO DEPARTMENT CAN KEEP ATTORNEYS INFORMED.

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3. EUR/CAN TELEPHONE CONVERSATIONS RELAYING GIST OF REFTEL (B) TO ATTORNEYS LED TO ATTORNEY JOEL ROSENBLOOM (STATIONS WKBW, BUFFALO, AND WCAX, BURLINGTON) REQUESTING DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY VINE FOR MEETING WHICH WAS THEN HELD

ON MAY 13. ROSENBLOOM AND FIVE COLLEAGUES ATTENDED, REPRESENTING STATIONS IN BANGOR, BELLINGHAM, BUFFALO, BURLINGTON, ERIE, AND PLATTSBURGH.

4. AT MAY 13 MEETING, ATTORNEYS SHOWED INTEREST IN APPROACH SUGGESTED IN REFTEL (B), BUT WERE NONCOMMITTAL ABOUT POSSIBILITY OF THEIR FOLLOWING IT.

5. ATTORNEYS SAW DELETION/SUBSTITUTION AS GREATER THREAT THAN TAX DISCRIMINATION. THEY WOULD NOT CONFIRM, BUT APPEARED CONFIDENT, THAT THEIR STATIONS WOULD SEEK FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION APPROVAL TO USE SELECTIVE INTERFERENCE TECHNIQUES--JAMMING, FOR SHORT-- WHEREUPON STATIONS COULD THREATEN CANADIAN AUDIENCES WITH LOSS OF RECEPTION. VINE DOUBTED EFFICACY OF THREAT, AND DECLINED TO PREDICT STATE DEPARTMENT POSITION ON JAMMING IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES. INGERSOLL

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